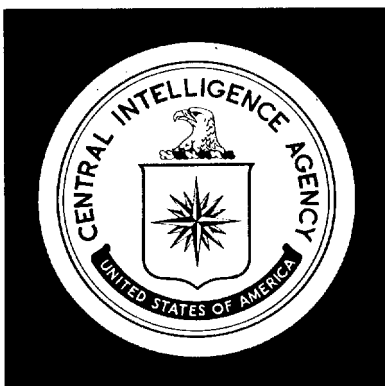


Secret

SENSITIVE



Memorandum

*North Vietnam's Manpower and Logistics Capabilities
for Carrying Out Offensive Military Operations in
South Vietnam During the Next Three Months*

DIA & NSA Declassification/Release Instructions on file.

Secret

Handle via Comint Channels

SC-07039/72
10 April 1972

#7

WARNING

This document contains classified information affecting the national security of the United States within the meaning of the espionage laws, US Code Title 18, Sections 793, 794, and 798.

THIS DOCUMENT MUST BE KEPT IN COMMUNICATIONS INTELLIGENCE CHANNELS AT ALL TIMES

It is to be seen only by personnel especially indoctrinated and authorized to receive COMMUNICATIONS INTELLIGENCE information within the Government to which transmitted; its security must be maintained in accordance with COMMUNICATIONS INTELLIGENCE REGULATIONS.

No action is to be taken on any COMMUNICATIONS INTELLIGENCE which may be contained herein, regardless of the advantages to be gained, unless such action is first approved by the Director of Central Intelligence.

GROUP 1 EXCLUDED FROM AUTOMATIC DOWNGRADING AND DECLASSIFICATION

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
10 April 1972

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

**NORTH VIETNAM'S MANPOWER AND LOGISTICS CAPABILITIES
FOR CARRYING OUT OFFENSIVE MILITARY OPERATIONS
IN SOUTH VIETNAM DURING THE NEXT THREE MONTHS**

Introduction

1. This memorandum addresses the question of North Vietnam's capabilities to continue the present Communist offensive in South Vietnam during the next three months at current or accelerated levels. The discussion concerns enemy capabilities as judged from historical experience and from current signs of logistical and manpower readiness. It does not take explicit account -- in a quantitative way -- of the possible impact on enemy behavior of successfully parrying his offensive efforts by Allied military actions or disrupting his supply system by a greatly accelerated bombing interdiction effort. Such factors obviously bear on this analysis, and have clearly been operative in previous Communist main force actions.

2. The overall capabilities question is approached by examining manpower, logistics, North Vietnam's general manpower reserves, infiltration and the disposition of enemy forces, the magnitude of Hanoi's commitment to current operations, and current Communist capabilities and by making a brief comparison of enemy and friendly force ratios. After a general look, these matters are assessed with specific reference to each of South Vietnam's four military regions.

3. Our net judgment is that the Vietnamese Communists have the overall manpower and logistic capabilities necessary to sustain their offensive activities for the next three months -- that is, to sustain major main force activity in Military Regions (MRs) 1 and 2, heavy main force probes in MR 3, and moderate harassment, principally by fire, in MR 4. As indicated above, this judgment perforce ignores several critical variables -- for

Note: This memorandum was prepared by the Central Intelligence Agency in coordination with the Defense Intelligence Agency.

example, the impact of Allied counteroffensive operations or unusually heavy enemy supply or manpower losses as a result of Allied air activity (which are **not** postulated). It presupposes other variables, such as a pattern of combat generally similar to that seen since 30 March, a pattern incorporating lulls and respites even in periods of overall heavy pressure. Finally, it is stressed that this memorandum deals with logistic and manpower **capabilities** for a relatively brief time span (three months). It does not address intentions or the possible political or psychological impact on friendly or enemy forces of the outcome of key single engagements or campaigns. Communist intentions are addressed in a separate, complementary paper.

Conclusions

Manpower

4. The combat forces North Vietnam now has in place are adequate to prosecute the war during the next three months at current or even slightly higher levels of intensity, provided Communist loss levels do not rise precipitously in the next few weeks. In MR 1 the enemy can continue heavy fighting for about the next three months – given his short lines of communication and enhanced firepower capability and the fact that the weather is likely to remain good until September. The enemy's capability is similar in MR 2, but by mid-May weather will become an increasingly important factor. The intensity of fighting in the B-3 Front area will undoubtedly be stepped up in the next few weeks, and on a manpower basis alone it could be broadened to other areas of MR 2 over the next two-three months. In MR 3 the enemy has the capability to increase significantly the pressure against ARVN forces, especially in the border provinces; and if the combat forces now along the border are committed to combat, the enemy could expand deeper into MR 3, although expecting to meet stiff and preponderant Allied resistance. The enemy's main force capability in MR 4 is considerably less than in the other military regions, and the best he can hope for probably is to tie down the GVN forces there in a standoff defensive situation, although the Communists can raise the level of harassment and terrorism.

Logistics

5. From a logistics standpoint, the North Vietnamese are in a much better position now than they were a year ago. A heavy flow of supplies this dry season has resulted in a buildup of stocks, particularly in or near the northern half of South Vietnam. In MR 1 the Communists probably

have sufficient supplies nearby to sustain the present offensive for three or more months. Continuing resupply during the remainder of the dry season can be used to replenish stocks as they are consumed or destroyed. In MR 2, heavy supply movements have accompanied the unprecedented buildup of enemy troops in the B-3 Front area. The enemy can undoubtedly launch a major offensive now and should be able to maintain a sufficient flow of supplies to continue an offensive for several months. In MR 3 the enemy probably has sufficient supplies on hand to sustain major engagements in the border provinces and -- depending on Allied resistance -- could gradually extend the scope of such operations to other areas of MR 3. Logistics will continue to be a limiting factor in the region as a whole, however. In MR 4, enemy forces probably can logistically support several combat high points such as are now occurring as well as a more extensive use of indirect fire attacks. But it is highly unlikely that the enemy could sustain a major offensive in MR 4 over the next three months unless he has some unusual success in landing supplies across the beaches.

Discussion

North Vietnam's Manpower Reserves

6. Hanoi has sufficient overall manpower reserves to continue the Indochina war at current levels of intensity during the next three months. It has a manpower pool of an estimated 1.3 million male civilians aged 15-39 who are fit for military service, approximately one-half million of whom are in the 17-25 age bracket. North Vietnam can induct and train up to 100,000 men per year without drawing down this reserve. While raw manpower reserves thus pose no constraint to Hanoi during the next three months, the high and persistent loss levels suffered by the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) have caused deterioration in the quality of North Vietnamese soldiers -- both cadres and troops -- during the past several years. North Vietnamese commanders in the field are faced with the problem of operating on unfamiliar territory with greener troops and less experienced cadres than in the past. There is no shortage of raw recruits, but it is doubtful that experienced officers and NCO's are available in sufficient numbers for North Vietnam to expand its present force structure in the next several months.

7. Conscription in North Vietnam appears to have been high over the past year,⁽¹⁾ and there are several good indications that a major callup occurred during December 1971 and early January 1972. While this callup

1. Estimated at about 150,000 men.

immediately affects only North Vietnam's training base -- there is a three to four month timespan between induction and availability for assignment -- these troops could be intended as replacements for future combat losses.

Infiltration and Disposition of Forces

8. Hanoi appears to have made the maximum feasible commitment to the war in South Vietnam this dry season -- from the point of view of infiltration and unit deployment. Thus far, Hanoi has dispatched about 120,000 infiltrators to the southern war zones. This compares with some 106,200 during the entire dry season last year (1970/71). The number of new infiltration starts has been low in recent weeks, but the current large-scale military action in South Vietnam may portend a resumption of the infiltration flow toward the end of the current dry season -- perhaps even extending into the early part of the rainy season.

9. Dry-season infiltration starts during 1970/71 and 1971/72, by destination, are as follows:

	<u>1970/71</u> <u>(Sep-Jun)</u>	<u>1971/72</u> <u>(Sep-early Apr)</u>
GVN MRs 1 and 2		
Tri-Thien-Hue	6,000	12,000
MR 5	14,200	16,000
B-3 Front	14,500	42,000
GVN MRs 3 and 4 and Cambodia		
COSVN	45,000	36,000
Southern Laos	26,500 <u>a/</u>	14,000
<i>Total</i>	<i>106,200</i>	<i>120,000</i>

a. Including some units deployed for Lam Son 719.

10. Clearly the most significant increments to total infiltration are the 42,000 currently estimated for the B-3 Front (this figure includes the NVA 320th Division), and the 12,000 in the Tri-Thien-Hue (TTH) area

(which includes the 324B Division). The following tabulation shows the estimated current infiltration flow, by order of battle (OB) area, and indicates that on the order of 80,000 of the 120,000 infiltrators were headed for South Vietnam, compared with 40,000 for southern Laos and Cambodia.

Thousands			
<u>Destination</u>	<u>Strength</u>	<u>OB Area</u>	<u>Strength</u>
Tri-Thien-Hue Region	12	→ MR 1	20
MR 5	16	→	
B-3 Front	42	→ MR 2	50
COSVN	36	→ MR 3	5 a/
		→ MR 4	5 a/
		→ Cambodia	26 a/
Southern Laos	14	→ Southern Laos	14
<i>Total</i>	<i>120</i>		<i>120</i>

a. This breakdown is a rough illustrative estimate.

11. We estimate that this year's infiltration has provided for an expansion of the NVA combat OB in South Vietnam and Cambodia by about 27,000 men, increasing the combat OB about 22,000 in South Vietnam and providing for a 5,000-man increase to COSVN's concentration of combat forces in Cambodia opposite GVN MR 3. The remaining 93,000 infiltrators have been used to expand the rear services system in southern Laos and Cambodia and provide a stock of fillers to offset combat casualties.

12. A further expansion of the enemy OB in South Vietnam occurred in late March and early April, when 28,000 more combat troops deployed into the country in organic units from North Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.⁽²⁾ This increase, together with the 22,000 increment owing to infiltration, raises the enemy's South Vietnam combat OB to about 120,000 men, as shown in the following tabulation:

2. These forces include the 304th and 308th Divisions from North Vietnam, elements of the 2nd Division from southern Laos, and three regiments from Cambodia.

	<u>Dec 1969</u>	<u>Dec 1970</u>	<u>Dec 1971</u>	<u>Apr 1972</u>
VC/NVA	<u>130-150</u>	<u>105-120</u>	<u>105-120</u>	<u>145-165</u>
South Vietnam <u>a/</u>	130-150	85-95	80-90	115-130
Cambodia	--	20-25	25-30	30-35
Khmer Communists	<u>N.A.</u>	<u>10-20</u>	<u>15-30</u>	<u>15-30</u>
Pathet Lao/ NVA <u>b/</u>	<u>55-65</u>	<u>60-70</u>	<u>70-85</u>	<u>65-80</u>
Northern Laos	35-40	30-35	40-45	40-45
Southern Laos	20-25	30-35	30-40	25-35

a. Figures for South Vietnam include those NVA forces located in southern North Vietnam between Dong Hoi and the DMZ which are considered to be a threat to South Vietnam. These forces numbered 13,000 in December 1969, 10,000 in December 1970, 12,000 in December 1971, and 20,000 in late March 1972. The latter 20,000 troops deployed to the GVN along with 8,000 additional combat troops from Cambodia and Laos between late March and early April. The figure for South Vietnam for 1969 includes some forces actually stationed in Cambodia but targeted against South Vietnam.

b. Including troops in air defense units.

The Magnitude of Hanoi's Commitment

13. The manpower indicators demonstrate the magnitude of North Vietnam's current manpower commitment for the war in South Vietnam. As a result of dry season infiltration, unit redeployments, and an earlier expansion of the force structure in Laos, Hanoi now has reduced the number of infantry divisions available within North Vietnam for home defense or deployment elsewhere in Indochina to the lowest level of the war (including early 1971 when Hanoi deployed four divisions to counter Operation Lam Son 719). The tabulation below depicts these division dispositions.

On a regimental basis, the some 15 regular infantry regiments⁽³⁾ currently remaining in North Vietnam (including both independent regiments and those subordinate to divisions) reflect an even greater drawdown in North Vietnam's mobile reserve than Hanoi's previous low point in the Tet 1968 period.

Division	March 1968		April 1972	
	North Vietnam	Out-of-Country	North Vietnam	Out-of-Country
304th		South Vietnam		South Vietnam
308th	X			South Vietnam
312th	X			Laos
316th		Laos		Laos
320th		South Vietnam		South Vietnam
324B		South Vietnam		South Vietnam
325th		South Vietnam	X	
330th	X		X	
350th	X		X	
<i>Total</i>	4	5	3	6

14. A final measure of North Vietnam's commitment to the war in South Vietnam this dry season is obtained by examining the number of NVA combat and administrative services troops deployed out of country since 1968, as shown in the tabulation below. Although the overall number of forces out of country is greater than it was in 1968, because of increased requirements in Cambodia and Laos, the number in South Vietnam is less than in 1968.

3. Including six regiments subordinate to the 330th and 350th Infantry Divisions. These two divisions have, for the past several years, been heavily involved in training recruits as well as in their normal home defense role.

	Thousands				
	<u>Dec 1968</u>	<u>Dec 1969</u>	<u>Dec 1970</u>	<u>Dec 1971</u>	<u>Apr 1972</u>
Total <u>a/</u>	215	210	195	210	250
South Vietnam <u>b/</u>	170	145	75	80	120
Cambodia	--	--	35	30	35
Laos <u>c/</u>	45	65	85	100	95

a. Including combat and administrative service personnel.

b. Including those NVA forces located in North Vietnam between Dong Hoi and the DMZ considered a threat to the GVN. These forces numbered about 20,000 in December 1968, 13,000 in December 1969, 10,000 in December 1970, and 12,000 in December 1971. There were some 20,000 troops in the threat area in March 1972, but these all had deployed into northern South Vietnam by 3 April.

c. Including personnel in air defense units.

Current Combat Capabilities - Enemy and Friendly

15. Hanoi's willingness to move an increasing proportion of its troops outside North Vietnam has resulted in changes in the comparative enemy-versus-friendly main force strengths in South Vietnam. As can be seen by the following tabulation, GVN main forces enjoy a significantly greater superiority in MRs 3 and 4 than in MRs 1 and 2 -- even with the inclusion of all of COSVN's 5th, 7th, and 9th⁽⁴⁾ Cambodia-based Divisions in the MR 3 ratio, and Cambodia's Phuoc Long Front in MR 4's ratio.

	Main Force Ratios (Allied to VC/NVA) <u>a/</u>				
<u>As of</u> <u>1 April</u>	<u>MR 1</u>	<u>MR 2</u>	<u>MR 3</u>	<u>MR 4</u>	<u>Total</u>
1968	2.4	3.3	3.9	2.4	2.9
1970	2.5	7.0	4.5	8.3	4.2
1972	1.9	2.1	3.3	4.6	2.8

a. The figures, based on CIA analysis, are a ratio of aggregate maneuver battalion strength. They include US forces for 1968 and 1970 only, and in 1972 they include the GVN's regional force battalions. The ratios also include for 1972 the 320th, 324B, 308, and 304th NVA Divisions. The ARVN side of the ratio for MRs 1 and 2 includes the planned deployment of the remaining Marines and Airborne units out of the reserves but does not include other recent ARVN redeployments which would alter the ratios somewhat. This effect, however, is offset to some degree by the enemy and friendly losses thus far in the campaign.

4. Including also the 271st and 24th Independent NVA Regiments.

16. Between 1970 and 1972 the Main Force Ratio for all military regions shows a significant decrease as a result of US troop withdrawals and the substantial augmentation of enemy main forces this dry season. Furthermore, the initial impact of the enemy's current offensive in northern MR 1 emphasizes the importance of Allied tactical air support to GVN main forces in meeting major enemy actions. Very recent COMINT indicates that elements of the NVA 325th Division have now moved south from Hanoi to below Vinh. If this division continues to move south either in a reserve status in the DMZ area or into the northern MR 1 fighting, the force ratio for MR 1 will decline even further -- closer to parity.

17. Another significant development impacting on the current fighting and that of the next three months is the introduction by North Vietnam of a very high level of firepower. To date, Hanoi has mobilized within northern MR 1 its heaviest concentration of NVA firepower of the war. For the first time, the NVA has within Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces at least five artillery regiments -- compared with a previous high of only three. In addition, Hanoi has deployed into MR 1 elements of at least four air defense regiments and major elements of an armor regiment. In MR 2 the enemy also has introduced what appears to be the largest concentration of firepower in the B-3 Front area during the war -- artillery plus air defense and armor units. This dry season the use of armor also appears to have extended down into MR 3 for the first time.

18. Not only has the enemy augmented the absolute number of guns but, equally important, he has introduced into South Vietnam new weapons with greater range and firepower. This includes 130-mm field guns, 152-mm howitzers, and possibly 160-mm mortars. He also seems to be in the process of deploying surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) to South Vietnam for the first time in the war. There are some indications the enemy may have intended to support the offensive in MR 1 with aircraft, but to date he has refrained from ground support operations and, in the face of the US air response, has limited his offensive air activity.

19. To date, the level of VC/NVA losses from the current fighting within South Vietnam is unclear. While they probably have been heavy in MR 1, considering the number of enemy forces committed, casualties apparently have not been relatively as high as in other periods of heavy fighting during the last three years. For one thing, poor weather conditions have restricted US/GVN tactical air operations -- a major firepower advantage for the South Vietnamese. Second, the enemy's initial attacks in MR 1 were largely attacks by fire with only limited ground assaults, thereby minimizing casualties.

Current Military Region Assessment (5)

Military Region 1

20. A substantial portion of enemy main forces in MR 1 this dry season is concentrated in Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces and now is larger than any year during the war. To counter the present enemy major offensive in the two northern provinces, friendly forces are relying heavily on concentrated B-52 bombing support missions, tactical air, and main force reinforcement from MRs 3 and 4.

5. In the analysis of enemy strategies presented to the Senior Review Group (SRG) last April, it was indicated that if the enemy were intending to carry out a prolonged offensive in 1972, his force structure would be approximately as follows (based on the 1968 enemy deployment patterns):

<u>MR 1</u>	<u>MR 2</u>	<u>MR 3</u>	<u>MR 4</u>	<u>Cambodia</u>
55,000	33,000	27,000	20,000	45,000

At the present time, the enemy combat force (VC/NVA) is estimated to be deployed roughly as follows (in round numbers)*:

<u>MR 1</u>	<u>MR 2</u>	<u>MR 3</u>	<u>MR 4</u>	<u>Cambodia</u>
50,000+	33,000+	19,000	17,000	35,000

The April SRG study indicated that for the enemy to maintain a prolonged offensive along 1968 lines, he would require an annual infiltration on the order of 250,000 to 300,000 (this total was based on an estimate of enemy losses throughout 1968). The level of infiltration thus far in the current dry season -- approximately 120,000 -- is, of course, far below that total. However, to this must be added the organic unit redeployments which have taken place outside the infiltration channels -- on the order of 30,000 combat troops to the war theater as a whole. Furthermore, in 1968 much of the infiltration took place **after** the heavy fighting had commenced, rather than before. Between April and August 1968, some 130,000 replacement troops were sent into South Vietnam via the infiltration routes. It is not possible to judge whether Hanoi is preparing such a massive infiltration activity at this time, but there are signs -- current recruitment and maintenance of the infiltration pipeline -- that at least some more infiltration is to come.

* DIA estimates are as follows:

<u>MR 1</u>	<u>MR 2</u>	<u>MR 3</u>	<u>MR 4</u>	<u>Cambodia</u>
50,000+	35,000-	10,000-	12,000-	30,000-
	40,000	15,000	15,000	35,000

21. The main force shield around the coastal lowlands which depended on long-range and medium-range artillery (175-mm, 155-mm, and 105-mm), armor/infantry reaction forces, and Allied tactical air has been penetrated by enemy main forces. This was primarily due to a curtailment of Allied tactical air effectiveness owing to bad weather and the use of SAMs as well as to massive enemy firepower directed from covert positions during the initial stages of the offensive. The offensive may be approaching a new phase after an extended lull in combat activity. The weather was a decisive factor in the initial stages of offensive activity and probably will be again for the second phase of the offensive. COMINT indicates that elements of the 325th NVA Division have moved out of the Hanoi area to a point south of Vinh. If the entire division moves into southern Quang Binh Province or northern GVN MR 1, this will increase the enemy main force threat to friendly forces operating in the area and the main force ratio will approach parity.

22. Poised to meet the enemy's next move in northern MR 1 are GVN main force units from the 1st and 3rd ARVN Divisions, the Vietnamese Marine Corps Division, and a Ranger Division, with the 2nd ARVN Division deployed further south. The North Vietnamese ability to execute successful major assaults in northern MR 1 will depend on the will of GVN main forces to stand and fight together with sustained and effective Allied firepower. In any case, the North Vietnamese have the capability from the standpoint of manpower to sustain a major offensive in MR 1 for the next three months.

Military Region 2

23. Since January 1972 the enemy has dramatically increased his main force structure in MR 2, primarily within Pleiku and Kontum Provinces. The estimated current level of infiltration to the B-3 Front is approximately 42,000 men, with an additional 16,000 destined for VC MR 5 (which includes the coastal lowlands of MR 2 and southern MR 1). Infiltration to MR 2 is the highest recorded at any time during the war. Included in the infiltration total is the deployment of one full division, the 320th, in addition to filler and replacement personnel. Moreover, two regiments of the NVA 2nd Division have been deployed into Kontum Province from southern Laos. Rounding out the enemy manpower buildup has been the unprecedented flow of war materiel to the central highlands. Although 130-mm field guns have not been detected in the area, heavy mortars and medium-range artillery have been deployed to support enemy ground forces. In addition, it is believed that antiaircraft artillery has been provided to this area for the first time, representing a new threat to Allied tactical air and helicopter support operations. Finally, reports have suggested that the enemy plans to employ a significant armor force during offensive

operations this dry season.⁽⁶⁾ COMINT and forward air controller reports have indicated that NVA tanks were deploying in the direction of the central highlands from southern Laos.

24. Friendly main forces have assumed a defensive posture centered around key fire support bases forming a main force shield supported by B-52 bombing missions, Allied tactical air, medium-range artillery (155-mm and 105-mm), and armor/infantry reaction forces designed to protect the province capitals of Kontum and Pleiku Cities and key lines of communication. The firepower balance currently is in favor of friendly forces primarily as a result of Allied tactical air. However, as the wet season approaches in the central highlands around the end of April, friendly firepower assets will be reduced as bad weather affects the use of Allied tactical air. Moreover, elements of the NVA 3rd Division have moved to western Binh Dinh Province near Route 19 for purposes of interdicting ARVN convoys moving from Qui Nhon City to Pleiku City.

25. It seems certain that there will be heavy fighting within the next few weeks in the highlands, together with a resumption of the heavy fighting in MR 1, resulting in a great loss of life to both sides. Given the current friendly main force shield supported by effective Allied firepower and armor/infantry reaction forces, the GVN should be able to parry enemy main forces this dry season, but it will be faced with the strongest enemy total force structure in MR 2 since early 1968. The enemy's in-place manpower position should permit him to sustain heavy combat action for several months, barring decisive defeats at ARVN's hands in critical engagements or serious manpower losses inflicted by Allied airpower.

Military Region 3

26. Current evidence suggests that the enemy is shifting in MR 3 to main force warfare supported from Cambodia. The full manpower commitment on the enemy's part will depend on the extent to which he is able to reposition his main forces currently located in Cambodia. At least two VC/NVA infantry divisions have recently moved into MR 3. In addition, there are tenuous indications that the headquarters of COSVN's Artillery Command also has moved from Cambodia into MR 3, suggesting that some subordinate elements may soon follow.

27. The main weight of enemy attacks in MR 3 is undoubtedly yet to come. Enemy casualty rates, already apparently high at Loc Ninh, do not appear, however, to have reached a level which would curtail further activity in the next three-month period, although for the enemy to enlarge

6. The dry season in the highlands of MR 2 usually begins in November and continues through April.

the scope of his offensive to include major targets throughout MR 3, an increased manpower commitment would be required in that area.

Military Region 4

28. The VC/NVA's military posture is seriously eroded in MR 4 for several reasons, including the Communists' disastrous military losses during 1968, the subsequent movement of GVN forces into VC villages, and, more recently, improved ARVN aggressiveness. To offset this weakened military position, in late 1971 the communists began activating a division command echelon from under-strength units already within MR 4 and recently infiltrated at least one new NVA infantry regiment into the Delta. In addition, the Communists have recently shifted at least two infantry regiments of the Phuoc Long Front in Cambodia to the border of GVN Chau Doc Province.

29. Even with these forces, however, VC/NVA capabilities in MR 4 do not seem sufficient to pose a serious challenge to GVN military dominance on a large scale. Although there has been a recent upsurge in VC/NVA harassing actions in MR 4, enemy losses there have thus far been the lightest of all the military regions and can easily be sustained at this level for the next three months, even with some increase in enemy-initiated activity. It is unlikely that the enemy could sustain a major offensive in the area over this period unless substantial numbers of ARVN combat troops were dispatched to other military regions.

Logistics

30. The overall picture of enemy logistic activity during the past several months matches that of his military manpower commitment. In southern North Vietnam, stocks of ordnance, petroleum, and other war materiel are at very high levels. Unusually heavy levels of resupply have been detected in southern Laos and along the Cambodian and South Vietnamese frontiers -- particularly in the northern regions. Heavy supply activity has also been detected across the DMZ since before the beginning of the enemy offensive in MR 1. Communist forces in South Vietnam are in a much more favorable logistics posture currently than at this same time a year ago.

Supply Movements This Dry Season

Southern Laos

31. The Communists' annual dry season "General Transportation Offensive" in southern Laos which got into high gear in early January has

continued to the present.⁽⁷⁾ Facilitated by a considerable road construction effort and restructured logistic apparatus, large quantities of supplies have been moved from North Vietnam through the Laotian Panhandle into Cambodia and South Vietnam. A new road system has been built through the central Laos Panhandle; more than 100 miles of new roads are being constructed in northeastern Cambodia; new roads have been built through the DMZ into South Vietnam; and a series of new roads is being built south of the tri-border area, presumably to support troop deployments in the Central Highlands of South Vietnam.

32. The level of logistic activity noted in the southernmost part of the Laos Panhandle has been impressive. For example, as the "General Transportation Offensive" began in January, Binh Tram 35 in the Ban Bac area reportedly delivered some 3,500 short tons (an average of 113 short tons per day -- STPD) of supplies during the month -- probably the largest monthly total ever detected moving that far south.⁽⁸⁾ Besides these heavy southward deliveries, large quantities of supplies also have been detected moving eastward toward South Vietnam. Massive quantities of arms and ammunition have been included in the detected supply deliveries. For example, Binh Tram 45 shipped some 2,800 tons of ordnance to Binh Tram 46 along the new central road system during February. The shipments included virtually every category of weapon and ammunition known to be in the North Vietnamese inventory and represent the largest monthly shipment of munitions ever noted in COMINT in southern Laos. This high level of activity along the central corridor has continued through March. A summary report for the period 1-31 March indicated that around 5,000 tons of supplies had been shipped south by Binh Tram 45 near Muong Nong. The deliveries included at least 1,900 tons of rice, 1,000 tons of ordnance, and 1,100 tons of gasoline. The relatively large quantity of fuel is sufficient to sustain a major transport effort in extreme southern Laos and northern Cambodia into the wet season. In this connection, a 4 April intercept indicated that the North Vietnamese intend to continue this year's large-scale logistic campaign at least through April -- the "highpoint" month of the "General Transportation Offensive." The term "highpoint" may indicate that the enemy plans to move more supplies during April than in any of the previous months of the offensive.

7. The area has now entered the transitional weather phase preceding the rainy southwest monsoon season which starts usually in May. Thus far, however, weather has not yet affected the road system which remains in generally excellent condition.

8. Previous record levels of supply deliveries in the southern Panhandle were reached during February and March 1970 when Binh Tram 35 reported receiving an average of 107 STPD. Comparing the two, the 113 STPD figure for January 1972 represents Binh Tram 35's deliveries further south (not receipts from the north) well before the normal peak levels of activity in February-March.

33. This heavy supply activity in the southern Panhandle has resulted in supply throughput to South Vietnam and Cambodia this season being considerably higher than that of last year at this time, and, second, has allowed the Communists to augment their stockpiles of supplies, particularly of arms and ammunition. The stockpiles close to combat zones take on a particular significance as the wet season approaches. Throughput of arms and ammunition will be able to continue at significant levels despite the reduction in vehicle activity in the Laotian Panhandle necessitated by heavy seasonal rains.

Throughput to Cambodia and the B-3 Front⁽⁹⁾

34. Available COMINT intercepts from the tri-border area have been sufficient to provide a rough estimate of supply throughput to Cambodia and the B-3 Front from October through March this dry season.⁽¹⁰⁾ The resulting flow estimate for shipments to Cambodia ranged from 3,300 tons (18 STPD) to 5,200 tons (28 STPD). These deliveries comprised virtually all arms, ammunition, and equipment. The B-3 Front estimate is 3,100 tons (17 STPD) to 5,100 tons (28 STPD), comprising about one-third food and about 60% ordnance. The tabulation below summarizes the estimated throughput.

	Short Tons	
	<u>To Cambodia</u>	<u>To B-3 Front</u>
October	0	0
November	300	200
December	0-300 <u>a/</u>	0-200 <u>a/</u>
January	1,400	1,100
February	1,600	1,800
March	0-1,600 <u>a/</u>	0-1,800 <u>a/</u>
<i>Total</i>	<i>3,300-5,200</i>	<i>3,100-5,100</i>

NSA
25X1D1a

9. The relationship between these levels of resupply and the enemy's requirement for sustained offensive action is presented in the section entitled "The Current Enemy Logistics Situation in South Vietnam."

10. Because the number of days of shipping activity reflected in COMINT is relatively small, supply flows were calculated using a short tons per day (gross tonnages divided by number of days) factor. The composition was derived by averaging shipments to the B-3 Front which were identified by type. The estimate does not include rice moved east on Route 19 in northern Cambodia.

Supply Movements into GVN MR 1

Supply Flows from Laos

35. Since the beginning of the dry season the enemy has moved substantial quantities of supplies from Laos into MR 1, probably on the order of 3,000 tons. The heaviest supply movement apparently has occurred along Route 9 where in mid-January -- only days after the enemy's "General Transportation Offensive" in southern Laos had begun -- sensors indicated a surge in activity. Subsequently, during the period 17 January - 29 February, sensors detected more than 200 trucks moving east along Route 9 into MR 1. Sensors continued to reflect a high level of activity during March, which COMINT and collateral information indicated was associated with supply flows and the movement of heavy artillery into MR 1. The Communists also have moved large quantities of supplies into MR 1 over Route 922. According to sensors, since the beginning of the dry season nearly 300 trucks have moved east over this route. The enemy also has made use of Routes 925 and 926, although only light to moderate levels of truck traffic have been detected on these roads during February and March.

Supply Flows Through the DMZ

36. The Communists have moved significant quantities of supplies along Routes 103 and 120 across the DMZ to new Route 6086/608⁽¹¹⁾ for shipments farther south and east in MR 1. In late January, COMINT revealed substantial deliveries of arms and ammunition to the lower Panhandle of North Vietnam. COMINT reflected Rear Service units at Vinh shipped large quantities of 130-mm artillery ammunition to the B-5 Front. By mid-February, more than 3,500 rounds of this ammunition and 2,500 rounds of 122-mm ammunition had been moved to the DMZ area. Similar large shipments of other types of ammunition probably were delivered to the vicinity of the DMZ but were not detected in COMINT. In late February, nearly 500 rounds of 130-mm ammunition were shipped south from Vinh with a final destination of South Vietnam.

37. From February through mid-March, sensors indicated that possibly as many as 100-200 trucks may have entered MR 1 on Routes 103/120 out of the DMZ. It was not until mid-March, however, that supplies could have been trucked directly across the DMZ and down Route 6086/608 to as far south as the Route 9 junction, the main west

11. A year ago, enemy access across the DMZ into MR 1 was limited to foot and pack trails. By late March, when the Communists began their offensive in MR 1, four new roads had been built through the DMZ; the Route 6086/608 extensions of Routes 103 and 120, an extension of Route 102, and an extension of Route 1006.

to east road in MR 1.⁽¹²⁾ Therefore, supplies shipped across the DMZ in February and early March probably were portered eastward to combat forces on the many foot and pack trails in the area. Since mid-March, sensors have indicated a continued flow of truck traffic -- possibly another 100 trucks -- moving south out of the DMZ on this road.

38. The North Vietnamese also have moved substantial amounts of materiel across the DMZ along existing Route 1, although the exact amount is unknown. Taking advantage of the poor flying weather over northern MR 1, the North Vietnamese began shipping large quantities of supplies in late March. On 1 April, rear service elements reported that transportation forces had begun moving down Route 1, and, by 3 April, 130 vehicles carrying cargo had moved south. Self-propelled artillery also was noted moving south across the Ben Hai River. Finally, some supplies may have entered MR 1 across the DMZ on two other new roads, Routes 102 and 1006. Photography of 29 March also revealed that Route 1006 was sustaining truck traffic. Total supply movement across the DMZ is conservatively estimated at 1,500-2,000 tons to the present time.

Current Enemy Logistics Situation in South Vietnam

Military Region 1

39. Because of their proximity to major supply arteries in Laos and the DMZ, Communist forces in northern South Vietnam operate from a close and relatively secure logistics base. They have received a substantial increase in supply flows this year compared with a year ago and, in conjunction with local procurement of supplies, are in a strong supply position. Reports of resupply problems ⁽¹³⁾ in MR 1 have been limited almost exclusively to the coastal regions, and even in these areas the Communists have made some improvements, especially in the Quang Da Special Zone (Quang Nam Province). They appear logistically capable of supporting major sustained operations in MR 1 over the next three months and probably longer: the monsoon rains which affect other areas of South Vietnam would have less influence on Communist operations in the north. Supply problems in forward areas could affect the timing of some enemy actions.

40. To date this dry season the Communists have throughput on the order of 4,500-5,000 tons of supplies into MR 1 through Laos and across

12. Photography on 18 February showed that Route 6086/608 was motorable only to its junction with Route 925 or about 13 miles north of its junction with Route 9. Photography of 23 March indicated that the unfinished sections of Route 6086/608 had been completed and were carrying truck traffic to its junction with Route 9.

13. Since last summer, reports of enemy resupply problems throughout South Vietnam have fallen sharply. While this may be partly a function of reduced reporting, it almost certainly reflects an improved enemy logistic position.

the DMZ. Most of this total has been delivered to western Quang Tri since January. Although the composition of these supplies is unknown, it is estimated that food constitutes about 60% of the supplies while the rest is weapons, equipment, and ammunition - 1,700-1,900 tons. (14) Communist resupply requirements in MR 1 during all of 1968, a year which included Tet and two other offensives, amounted to an average of 14 STPD (consumption and ground losses). A similar expenditure rate, based on stocks existing at the present time, would permit the Communists to sustain a continued high level of combat for at least three months. (15) Throughput subsequent to April could be used to replenish stocks.

Military Region 2

41. Substantial supply deliveries have accompanied the unprecedented buildup of enemy troops in the B-3 Front area. COMINT has reflected heavy shipments of ordnance, particularly crew-served artillery and ammunition, into the area. There were complementary measures designed to improve the logistics posture of units in the B-3 Front taken late last year when the enemy shipped large volumes of foodstuffs from the coastal regions or MR 1 to help satisfy the increased requirements of the augmented troop strength. A VC cadre, captured on 15 March in Kontum Province, stated that since early February the North Vietnamese had been transporting food from B-3 Front rear areas to supply bases located near Kontum City and that some 1,500 tons of rice had been distributed to battlefield units.

42. Between October 1971 and March 1972 an estimated 3,100-5,100 tons of supplies were delivered to the B-3 Front out of southern Laos. (16) Weapons, ammunition, and equipment made up a little over half of this total (1,800-2,950 tons). Because of the recent substantial buildup of enemy forces and the concomitant upgrading of enemy arms, 1968 combat levels would probably considerably understate current enemy requirements for a major sustained engagement in the central highlands. Consequently, the current estimate for weapons, ammunition, and equipment that would be required to sustain offensive operations in this area is about 200 tons per month, somewhat higher than the estimated 1968 average. Detected shipments of ordnance to the B-3 Front are sufficient for sustained military operations for several months with reserves available for stockpiling and

14. Given recent enemy attempts to maximize local production/procurement of foodstuffs, this estimate probably is conservative.

15. DIA believes the current enemy expenditure rate to be considerably higher than this (20-40 SPTD). Thus, based on this expenditure rate and not allowing for resupply, the enemy would be capable of sustaining the offensive activity for one or two months.

16. Additional, possibly large, amounts of supplies have also moved to the B-3 Front via Route 19 in northeast Cambodia.

for cushioning the impact of losses resulting from air strikes. There could, of course, be distribution problems, particularly in the forward areas. (17)

Southern South Vietnam

43. Between October 1971 and March 1972 the enemy probably delivered about 3,300-5,200 tons of weapons, ammunition, and equipment into Cambodia. As much as 2,200 tons of this amount went to meet requirements in Cambodia itself; the residual of 1,100 to 3,000 tons was available for satisfying requirements in GVN MRs 3 and 4. Minimum resupply requirements in MRs 3 and 4 during that time period amounted to about 700 tons. The remaining tonnage would be adequate to sustain major operations in MR 3, but insufficient to meet the required amount for both MRs 3 and 4. If the enemy has had some undetected success in sea infiltration, adequate supplies might be available for both military regions. The distribution and prepositioning of these stocks by a weakened logistics infrastructure within MRs 3 and 4, however, continues to be an impediment to major sustained military engagements.

Military Region 3

44. Following the Allied cross-border incursions in early summer of 1970, the Communists began to rebuild their rear support apparatus and to expand their cross-border supply links to MRs 3 and 4. Beginning about mid-1971, the VC/NVA logistic units had established new supply routes, and some supplies were moving again from storage areas in Kampot and Kompong Cham Provinces into new cache areas close to the Cambodia - South Vietnam border. Despite several spoiling operations by ARVN to disrupt these efforts, [REDACTED] prisoner-of-war interrogations clearly show that since last summer this reoccupation and supply buildup in former sanctuary areas has steadily gained momentum.

45. Within Cambodia, no serious threat to the Communist logistic system currently supporting operations in MR 3 is expected over the next several months. The Communists can be expected to maintain supply deliveries from supply depots in Kratie, Chup, and Dambe to bases straddling the MR 3 border. Following the ARVN withdrawal from Krek in February, the tempo of enemy logistic activity surged dramatically as evidenced by the large increase in detected nighttime movement of motor vehicles between inland depots and the border. At the same time, [REDACTED] an increasing number of enemy caches near the border. Recent

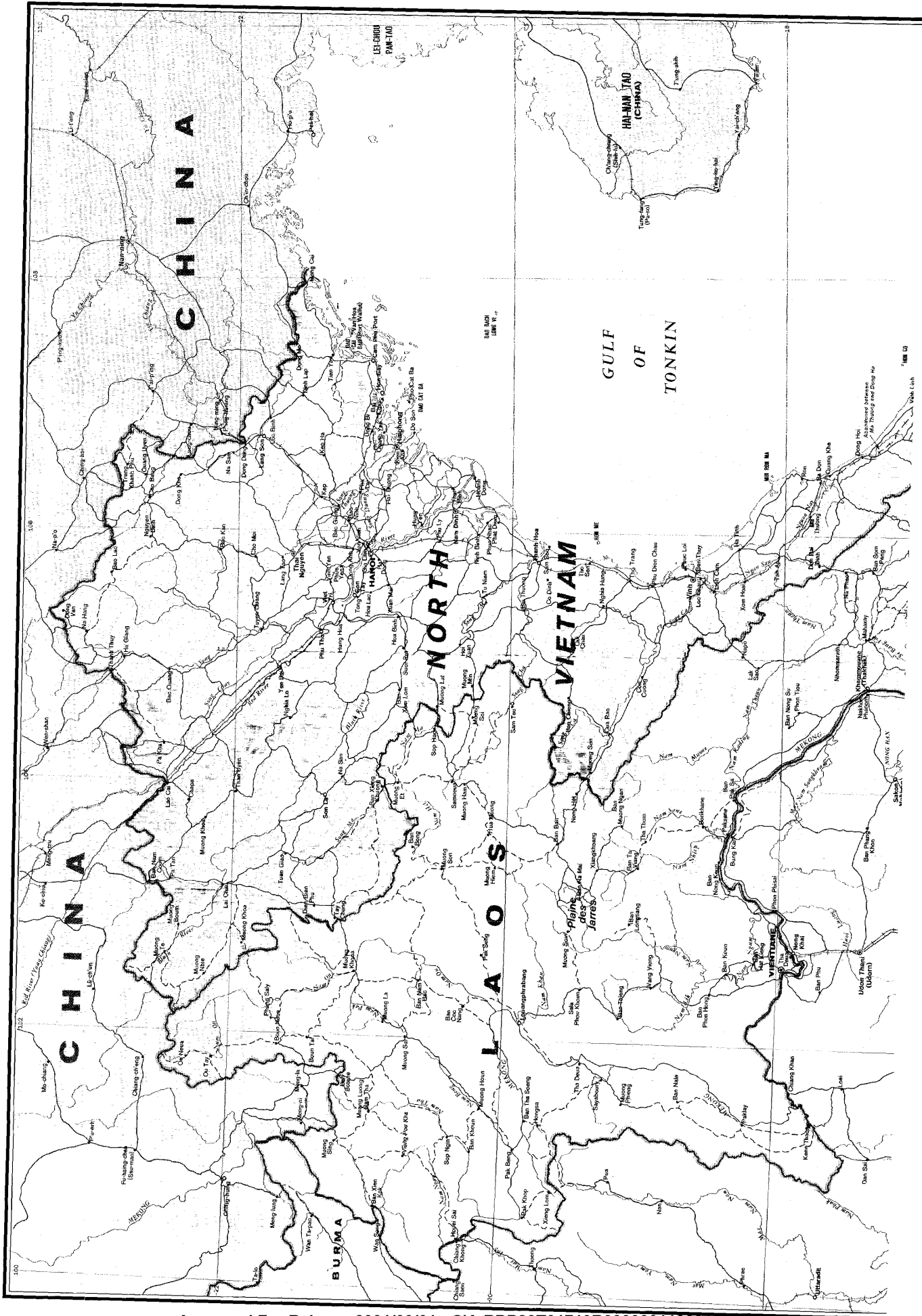
17. DIA believes that approximately half as much tonnage has been delivered to the B-3 Front and Cambodia. As in MR 1, DIA estimates that intensified combat operations could be supported for one to two months. Further resupply would depend on the enemy's ability to move additional supplies from Laos.

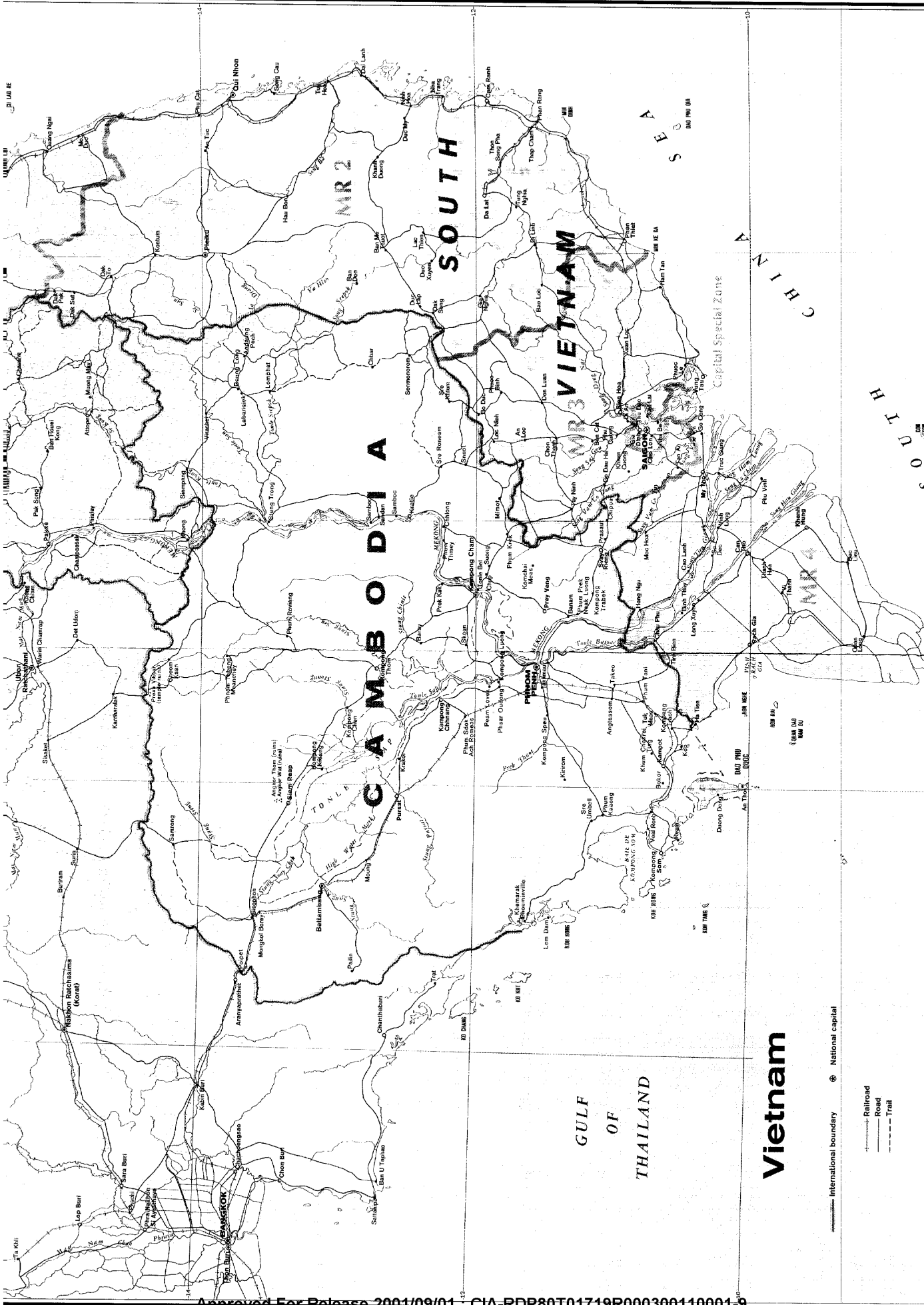
seizure of enemy caches in MR 3 has provided additional evidence of Communist success at stockpiling. Data are insufficient by which to quantify the enemy's logistical position in MR 3, but our judgment is that over the next three months the Communists will be capable of logistically supporting major engagements in the border provinces and, if they choose, gradually increasing the scale and intensity of harassing operations in other areas of MR 3. Much could depend, however, on the success of Allied countermeasures and the influence of the approaching wet season on Communist abilities to preposition supplies in forward areas. Overall, while we credit the enemy with an improving logistic capability in MR 3, the evidence suggests that he could not sustain a prolonged main force offensive in that area.

Military Region 4

46. Enemy sanctuaries opposite MR 4 were not as severely disturbed by the Allied incursions into Cambodia in 1970 as were those farther north. Large amounts of ordnance were hurriedly relocated by the Communists into Kampot Province (Cambodia) and parts of Kien Giang Province (South Vietnam) to escape capture. However, it was not until September 1971 that information appeared indicating that the Communists intended to reestablish supply channels from Cambodia into northern MR 4. By this time, small-scale shipments of weapons and ammunition began to move by sampan south along tributaries of the Mekong River. At about the same time, another supply route leading into northern MR 4 was found. This route was used to transport weapons and supplies originating from Chup into the Mekong Delta. Since mid-1971, according to several informed sources, resupply activity into southern MR 4 has been taking place using both overland and seaborne routes. Communist forces in MR 4 may also be meeting part of their resupply requirements from seaborne deliveries. Although it is unlikely that any of the 14 attempts by steel-hulled trawlers at supply infiltration this dry season were successful, recent reporting indicates that some small quantities of supplies are being moved from Cambodia into MR 4 via the Gulf of Siam. Reports of serious supply shortages, endemic before mid-1971, have tapered off since then.

47. The enemy's supply situation at present should enable the Communists to sustain several highpoints -- such as are now occurring -- and a commitment to the use of indirect fire attacks -- mortar and rocket shellings. However, major main force operations like those currently under way in MR 1 and those expected in the B-3 Front seem unlikely.





Secret



Secret